

# MSGA Presentation to the Private Land/Public Wildlife Council February 19-20, 2014

On behalf of the Montana Stockgrowers Association, I would like to thank the Private Land Public Wildlife Advisory Council, for an invitation to present comments on hunting access and landowner/sportsmen relations.

On the two questions asked by the PL/PW Council:

How can landowner, sportsmen, and outfitter relations be improved?

## How can access be improved?

MSGA solicited comments from one of our committees that focuses on wildlife, recreation and landowner issues. Given the controversy over access and wildlife management, MSGA did receive a positive comment regarding this topic: "If this is an attempt to understand why there are issues, then that in itself is progress."

## **Limiting Factors for Landowners**

- 1. Time
- 2. Limited Incentive
  - a. Fencing Supplies for game damage
  - b. Late Season Hunts reduction or elimination
  - c. Revenue
- 3. People Management
- 4. Shortage of FWP personnel out in the field
  - a. Wardens

#### **Landowner Concerns**

- 1. Increasing wildlife populations
- 2. Agency land purchases
- 3. Bad Hunter behavior

# How can landowner, sportsmen, and outfitter relations be improved? And (FWP)

- 1. Montana Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project
  - Implement into the Hunter Education program for both participants and instructors.
- 2. Increase FWP presence in the field.
  - a. Wardens
  - b. BMP technicians
- 3. Hunters need to police themselves, both on and off the ranch.
  - Shoot in the roadways, vandalize private property, throw their carcass out along the highways

- 4. Hunting requires investment, including building relationships.
- 5. Include landowners earlier in the process in the season setting.
- 6. Increase funding to USDA Wildlife Services
- Fully consider landowner concerns or requests regarding wildlife management or access issues.
- 8. Less emphasis on Trophy Game, more on population management
- 9. Landowners improving their communication
  - a. What are their expectations to hunters or FWP

# How can access be improved?

- 1. Block Management
  - a. Improving maps, better identification of open or closed roads.
  - b. Increase maximum limit per landowner
- 2. Landowner Licenses
  - a. HB454 Hunter Access Agreement
- 3. Flexible seasons, plus achieve a harvest quota if necessary
- 4. Ability to limit access
  - a. Landowners want to know who is hunting their property
  - b. Concerns over "shoot outs"
- 5. Are there ways to avoid landowners using hunting access as a political pushback?
  - a. Try and address landowner concerns earlier in issue conflicts.
    - i. Wolf Management
    - ii. Land Purchases
    - iii. Bison
- 6. What is the best way to provide a quality hunting experience?
  - a. For the hunter or landowner or both?
  - b. For landowners, conflict reduction
    - i. Provide a map to landowners, outside of BMP, to be distributed by the landowner for hunter management.
- 7. Build Relationships

Thank You

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